

## **J 4730/7730 Journalism & Conflict: Syllabus**

101A Lee Hills Hall  
12:30 PM – 1:45 PM, Tuesday & Thursday  
University of Missouri-Columbia School of Journalism  
Fall 2005

Prof. Michael Jonathan Grinfeld  
Office: 209 Lee Hills Hall  
Phone: 884-1633; 442-5882  
E-mail: [GrinfeldM@missouri.edu](mailto:GrinfeldM@missouri.edu)  
Virtual Office Hours: MJGJournalism  
on Yahoo Messenger & AIM

Office Hours: 10 A.M. – 12:00 Noon  
Monday and Wednesday  
and by appointment

### ***What can you expect to accomplish?***

From battlefields to courtrooms, from neighborhood brawls to global trade disputes, it is people in conflict who generate most of the stories journalists cover. The challenge for reporters is to distill the nuances from often complex disputes and to convey how they'll influence our daily lives. Meanwhile, to get the story, journalists must negotiate with sources, editors and community members in a process that can also lead to conflict.

In this class you will learn the skills you need to work with conflict effectively. You will receive an introduction to the basic principles of conflict theory, including the sources of conflict, why conflict escalates, and what the conditions are for de-escalation, all with a special emphasis on the implications for the working journalist.

The class will also provide you with essential negotiation skills, focusing on interactions with sources, newsroom personnel, and the public. Almost every aspect of journalism, from proposing a topic to the final edit, involves reaching consensus through interactions with others. By honing your negotiation skills, you'll become a more effective participant in the creative process.

### ***What will you need to do?***

The assignments during this course are designed to reinforce principles and skills you will learn in class. They'll include readings, role-plays, reporting and writing. You'll also need to keep a journal that analyzes elements of what you've learned in class and read in the assigned texts, emphasizing the effect on your ability to report on conflict and to interact with others.

While actually publishing your work is not a prerequisite for success in the class, you are required to submit at least one article or photo narrative (essay or documentary) to the *Missourian*, the *Maneater* or *Vox*, or send out a query letter to any publication that accepts work from freelance journalists. Students in broadcast, mass communication or advertising should see me to discuss individually tailored projects.

You'll be required to write two articles. The first will function primarily as a learning tool, giving you the opportunity to identify and write about a conflict using the tools you've learned in class.

For your final project, you will write an article about a conflict and an accompanying paper that describes how your understanding of conflict and negotiation tactics affected the story's outcome. Your topic may cover a disputed issue of local, regional, national or international significance. Students interested in publishing their final projects will have an opportunity to attend a voluntary "how to" seminar on freelance writing.

### ***What are the rules?***

**Relationships with the Public:** In most instances, you're going to disclose to sources and others within the community that you're a student working on an assignment for a class at the University of Missouri-Columbia School of Journalism. If you've pitched your story to a publication and you're working on an actual assignment, then you can tell the source whom you represent. If your story is accepted by a publication after you've written it, you'll need to get permission from sources to use their quotes beyond the classroom.

Be courteous and professional at all times.

Freely give sources my name and contact information if they want to confirm the assignment or if anyone asks to speak to someone "supervising" you.

If you're going to record an interview, particularly on the telephone, make sure you get permission. After receiving it, confirm the consent at the beginning of the interview while the tape is rolling (you can thank the source for permitting you to tape the interview.) The laws regarding wiretapping differ from state to state and it's safer to not even risk violating them.

**Your Responsibilities to the Class:** You should attend every class not only because there'll be important information to learn but also because it is unfair to deprive your classmates of your observations and insights. You'll be allowed to make up missed work in the event of (1) an emergency or major life cycle occasion involving an immediate family member; (2) your own serious illness or injury not attributable to your conduct, with a physician's verification that you were too ill to function if one is requested (e.g., a hangover, major sunburn or bungee jumping accident won't work—so take care of

yourself); (3) a religious holiday observance; (4) an absence for any other reason, at the discretion of the instructor, but only if you obtain permission prior to the class.

During the semester, you're allowed two unexcused absences, but not on days when role-plays are scheduled. Each unexcused absence thereafter causes a reduction in a half letter grade (for example, an A turns into an A-.) It is up to you to communicate regarding a request for an excused absence. All such requests must be submitted within 7 days after missing a class, or the absence will be considered unexcused.

It is impossible to make up role-plays regardless of the reason for your absence. If it is an excused absence, the missed grade will not be averaged into your overall grade. If it is an unexcused absence, you will receive a zero for that assignment.

Deadlines: Meeting deadlines in this class is important because you'll be simulating the pace required in the workplace. This means you must take each assignment seriously and hone your time management skills. Anticipate things that can go wrong and build in some "wiggle" room to counter them.

Academic Honesty/Student Misconduct: Thinking up ways to beat the system takes up as much energy as working within the rules. So use your intellect in ways that preserve your honor and integrity—key attributes of a professional journalist.

Academic honesty is fundamental to the activities and principles of a university. All members of the academic community must be confident that each person's work has been responsibly and honorably acquired, developed and presented. Any effort to gain an advantage not given to all students is dishonest whether or not the effort is successful.

Academic dishonesty and misconduct includes, but is not limited to, extensive use of materials from another author without citation or attribution; extensive use of verbatim materials from another author without citation or attribution; extensive use of materials from past assignments; and extensive use of assignments from other courses. When in doubt about plagiarism, paraphrasing, quoting or collaboration, consult the course instructor.

For exams, academic dishonesty and misconduct includes conferring with classmates during an exam in any way; copying or reading another's test; and using notes and other materials without permission of the instructor.

Academic dishonesty and misconduct also includes forgery; obstruction or disruption of teaching; physical abuse or safety threats; theft; property damage; disruptive, lewd or obscene conduct; abuse of computer time and university facilities; repeated failure to attend class when attendance is required; and repeated failure to participate or respond in class when participation is required.

The academic community regards academic dishonesty and misconduct as extremely serious. Violations of any of the principles outlined above may lead to consequences

ranging from failing the course to probation to expulsion.

“Classroom misconduct” includes forgery, obstruction or disruption of teaching, physical abuse or safety threats, theft, property damage, disruptive, lewd or obscene conduct, abuse of computer time, repeated failure to attend class when attendance is required and repeated failure to participate or respond in class when class participation is required.

The University's M Book Rules and Regulations regarding student classroom conduct and department, academic misconduct, including plagiarism and falsification, will be followed. Classroom misconduct will be reported immediately to the office of the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs. Academic misconduct allegations will be reported immediately to the Provost's office.

If you wish to avoid problems, please ask in advance if you have questions or concerns about the propriety of any conduct you're contemplating.

**The School of Journalism is committed to the highest standards of academic and professional ethics and expects its students to adhere to those standards. You must observe strict honesty while participating in the University's and School of Journalism's academic programs and as representatives of school-related media. Your final grade in the class is directly dependent upon your compliance with those standards at all times and your choosing not to comply with them will result in a failing grade. As a condition of participating in this class, therefore, you acknowledge and agree that should you be found guilty of plagiarism, falsification, misrepresentation or other forms of dishonesty in any assigned work that you will automatically receive a failing grade in the course regardless of the grade average of your other assignments. The failing grade is not disciplinary, so you may also be subject to disciplinary action as recommended pursuant to University regulations.**

Special Needs:

*ADA:* If you have special needs as addressed by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and need assistance, please notify the Office of Disability Services, A038 Brady Commons, 882-4696 or course instructor immediately. Reasonable efforts will be made to accommodate your special needs.

*Religious Holidays:* Students are excused for significant religious holidays whose observance mandates refraining from routine, daily activities. Please let me know in advance if you'll miss class for religious observance.

### ***How will you be graded?***

Your writing assignments should fulfill the goals and objectives of the lessons they support. They should also adhere to the journalistic standards you've learned, such as those relating to newsworthiness, organization (e.g., ethics, fairness, accuracy, theme, structure, use of sources), grammar (also spelling and punctuation), and language proficiency (e.g., word choice and style).

In the event you receive a grade below 70%, you are required to schedule an appointment with me within 48 hours to discuss your work

This class rewards professional-level performance and so you should bring to each assignment your best efforts without regard to "how much it counts" toward your final grade. Nevertheless, your grades act as a measure of your success and your progress is justifiably important to you.

The grade you receive for your articles will make up 70 percent of your final grade. The articles will carry a total value of 100 points: First article, 15 points; second article, 25 points; final article and paper, 30 points each.

The average of the grades you receive on your journals and class participation will make up 30 percent of your final grade.

Class participation is more than raising your hand and answering questions. To gain maximum credit, you should exhibit you're engaged in the learning process, excited about the prospect of discovery that is journalism, and passionate about your commitment to the art of writing. This is evidenced by your willingness to join your classmates in lively debates over ethical conundrums, to help each other get through the challenges the class presents, and to critique your own work and that of others constructively and analytically.

### ***What books and reading materials do I need?***

Required:

*Social Conflict: Escalation, Stalemate and Settlement*, Third Edition, Dean G. Pruitt, and Sung Hee Kim

*The Handbook of Conflict Resolution: Theory and Practice*, Morton Deutsch and Peter T Coleman

*Getting to Yes: Negotiating Agreement Without Giving In*, Roger Fisher and William Ury

*Difficult Conversations: How to Discuss What Matters Most*, Douglas Stone, Bruce Patton, Sheila Heen

Optional, Though Highly Recommended:

*Getting Together: Building Relationships as We Negotiate*, Roger Fisher and Scott Brown

*Getting Past No: Negotiating With Difficult People*, William Ury

*Barriers to Conflict Resolution*, Kenneth Arrow, Robert H. Mnookin, Lee Ross, Amos Tversky and Robert Wilson

### ***More About Office Hours***

Making an appointment (even during my scheduled office hours) means I'll block out time for you, so the likelihood that other commitments will intervene is more remote. Nevertheless, feel free to drop by any time to ask questions or to voice concerns. If I'm available, I'll be happy to meet with you or set up a time when we can talk. Accessibility is important to me, so I'll do my best to make sure you get the answers you need. I'll respond to all e-mails and telephone messages as promptly as my schedule permits, usually within 24 hours.

### ***Credit Where Credit is Due***

This course is the result of a collaboration between the School of Journalism and the School of Law that focuses on conflict and dispute resolution, including how reporting affects public opinion and then influences policymaking. For his contributions to the development and design of this course, my sincerest thanks to Prof. Richard C. Reuben, a member of the faculty at the law school and its Center for the Study of Dispute Resolution.

## J 4730/7730 Schedule

This schedule is a general outline of what we'll be doing over the next several months, but is subject to change.

### Conflict Theory

#### Week 1

*Tuesday, August 23:*

Introductions; A preview of the course; a general orientation.

*Thursday, August 25:*

Reading: *Handbook*, Chapter 1

Cooperation and Competition; "Win as Much as You Can!!!";

#### Week 2

*Tuesday, August 30:*

Reading: *Social Conflict*, Chapters 1, 2 and 11

A preliminary understanding of conflict and conflict resolution principles, including the conditions that can convert conflicts from destructive to constructive.

Personal Essay Assignment

*Thursday, September 1:*

Reading: *Handbook*, Chapter 2  
*Getting to Yes*, Chapter 1

The nature of conflict; Different theoretical approaches to understanding the source, nature and categories of conflict. Competitors, avoiders, and accommodators.

Week 3

*Tuesday, September 6:*

Reading: *Handbook*, Chapter 4

The nature of trust.

• **Personal Essays Due**

*Thursday, September 8:*

Reading: *Social Conflict*, Chapters 3 & 4

Tactical and strategic choices; Role-play: “What’s an editor know?”

• **Topics of first article due.**

Week 4

*Tuesday, September 13:*

Reading: *Handbook*, Chapter 5

The impact of power and trust.

*Thursday, September 15:*

Reading: *Social Conflict*, Chapter 5 & 6

Conflict and its escalation

Week 5

*Tuesday, September 20:*

Reading: *Social Conflict*, Chapter 7

The persistence of escalation

*Thursday, September 22:*

Reading: *Social Conflict*, Chapter 8  
*Handbook*, Chapter 8

Why conflict endures: intergenerational and religious conflicts; conflict stabilized

• **First draft of first article due**

Week 6

*Tuesday, September 27:*

Reading: *Social Conflict*, Chapter 9

“Failsafe”; Stalemate and de-escalation.

*Thursday, September 29:*

Reading: *Handbook*, Chapter 6

“Failsafe” (continued)

- **Final manuscript of first article due**

Week 7

*Tuesday, October 4:*

Reading: *Difficult Conversations*, Chapter 1

The media’s impact on communications during conflict; Role-play, “What do we tell the press?” An introduction to negotiating your way through anything.

*Thursday, October 6:*

Critiques of first articles.

Negotiation

Week 8

*Tuesday, October 11:*

Reading: *Getting to Yes*, Chapters 2 - 5

The method.

*Thursday, October 13:*

Reading: *Getting to Yes*, Chapters 6

Your best alternative to a negotiated agreement

- **Topics of final project due**

Week 9

*Tuesday, October 18:*

What is a good outcome? Role-play: “Well, at least I got most of the story.”

*Thursday, October 20:*

Reading: *Difficult Conversations*, Chapters 2 – 6

Role reversal and active listening; understanding that other people have interests, too.

Week 10

*Tuesday, October 25:*

Reading: *Difficult Conversations*, Chapter 7  
*Handbook*, Chapter 17

Negotiating with sources; The tension between creating and distributing value; Role-play, “Why would you want to give that story to the *Times*?”

*Wednesday, October 26*

[Tentative Role Play with Law School Conflict Theory Class: Wednesday, 6:00 PM-9:00 PM]

*Thursday, October 27:*

Reading: *Getting to Yes*, Chapters 7 & 8

Difficult tactics and hard bargaining

Week 11

*Tuesday, November 1:*

Creative tensions; negotiating with editors; Role-play, “But it’s a great story!”

*Thursday, November 3:*

Reading: *Difficult Conversations*, Chapter 8, 9

The tension between empathy and assertiveness

Week 12

*Tuesday, November 8:*

Reading: *Difficult Conversations*, Chapters 10 & 11

Negotiation ethics: Is it ok to lie so long as you get the story?

*Thursday, November 10:*

Reading: *Difficult Conversations*, Chapter 12

Negotiation ethics: When editors, reporters and the advertising department collide.

Week 13

*Tuesday, November 15:*

Role-play, "Firewall"

*Thursday, November 17:*

No Class

- **First Draft of Final Project Due (Optional/Article Only)**

Week 14

*Tuesday, November 29:*

No Class

*Thursday, December 1:*

Reading: *Social Conflict*, Chapter 11

Reading: *Handbook*, Chapter 22, 25

Negotiating with the community; Gender and cultural issues.  
Additional models of conflict resolution: Mediation, Litigation vs. arbitration

- **Final project due**

Week 15

*Tuesday, December 6:*

Critiques of Final Projects

- **Final project paper due**

*Thursday, December 8:*

Critiques of Final Projects. Pulling it all together: what we've learned about our profession, our world and ourselves.